SUMMER 2021 : VOLUME 2 : ISSUE 3

Ṣirāṭ Link

A path for connecting with Allah, others, and one's self

Wilāyah

Eid: A Day of Celebration

Why Imām ʿAlī (ʿa)?

Day of ʿArafah

Letter from MOULANA ABIDI

Salāmun alaykum

My *taḥiyyāt* (best wishes and prayers) and *tabrīkāt* (congratulations) to you all on this auspicious occasion of Eid ul-Fiṭr. Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir (ʿa) has said, *"On the first day of Shawwāl it is announced from the heavens, 'O believers, set out early in the morning to receive your gifts and rewards! Indeed, the rewards of Allah are not like those of any other king."*

Alḥamdulillāh. We have completed our journey of self-building this month and inshāʾAllāh have attained many gifts and rewards. Now it is our duty and our responsibility to build on this great achievement and safeguard it from weakening. Allah says in the Noble Qurʾān:

خُذُوا مَآ ءَاتَيْنَـٰكُم بِقُوَّةٍ وَٱذْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

Hold on with strength to what We have given you and remember that which is in it, so that you may be Godwary. (7:171)

Brothers and sisters, in this great month we have learned to be organized, punctual and revolve our lives around Allah. We have become vigilant of our duties and responsibilities and now we must work to enhance that vigilance in order to remain strong on this path. All of our dīn (religion) and it's aḥkām (rules) are based on Allah's wisdom of what is best for us. Therefore every *ḥalāl* (permissible) and *wājib* (obligatory) provides that which is good and *khayr* (best outcome) for us, and every *ḥarām* (not permissable) protects us from that which negatively affects us in our long term goals.

Adhering to Allah's laws can be a challenge at times—even though they are the best for us, they may not be the easiest choice to make. In order for us to be obedient to these rules and laws we need to:

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Ṣirāṭ Link

A 2nd Chance Books Publication

وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا

For the love of Him, they feed the needy, the orphan, and the prisoner.

(Noble Qurʾān 76:8)

2nd Chance Books is a non-profit organization that was founded in order to assist incarcerated Muslims by providing them with educational materials, tools for rehabilitation, and a support system. By responding to their numerous questions about Islam, they gain a more thorough understanding of the religion. So far, 2nd Chance has distributed over 12,000 books to inmates across the country.

Among 2nd Chance's most recent initiatives is Ṣirāṭ Link, a quarterly magazine. The title Ṣirāṭ Link, inspired by the Arabic term Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm which means the right path, presents this magazine as a means of guidance to a greater connection to Allah, as well as offering the opportunity for connections with the broader community, and the improvement of one's self. InshāʾAllāh it can also serve as an opportunity for growing one's faith through education.

This magazine will be under the guidance and oversight of Moulana Nabi Raza Mir Abidi, Resident ʿĀlim of SABA Center, and several other scholars and experts.

- Strengthen our trust in Allah and belief that He always wants what is best for us in this world and the next.
- Strengthen our *taqwā* (God-consciousness).

Taqwā comes from the root *'wiqayāh'* which means to safeguard oneself by being conscious of the boundaries that Allah has placed for us. All of us have the seed of *taqwā* in our hearts. One of the most powerful ways that Allah helps this seed of *taqwā* to grow and strengthen is through fasting in the month of Ramaḍān. The Qur'ān clearly states that the end goal of fasting in this month is to become muttaqī (God-conscious).

When we maintain this *taqwā*, Allah promises us that:

- He is always with us (16:128): إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوا
- He will save us (19:72): ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوا
- He will light and guide our path to Him (57:28):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَآمِنُوا بِرَسُولِهِ يُؤْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ مِن رَّحْمَتِهِ وَيَجْعَل لَّكُمْ نُورًا تَمْشُونَ بِهِ

- He will make that path easy for us (65:4):

وَمَن يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّهُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا

- He will help us resolve our problems and give us sustenance in ways we could never imagine (65:2-3):

وَمَن يَتَّقِ ٱللَّـهَ يَجْعَل لَّهُۥ مَخْرَجًا ﴿٢﴾ وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ

- He will give us the power to decipher right from wrong (8:29):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّكُمْ فُرْقَانًا

- We will have the most favorable and best outcome (7:128): وَٱلْعَـٰقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

On this auspicious day, it is recommended that all believers make each other happy through exchanging gifts, which can be as simple as exchanging smiles with one another. Let us dismiss our grudges and forgive one another. Remember to greet and congratulate your fellow believers. Exchange greetings over the phone or through other means with those who live far away.

Lastly, do not forget that our master, *Imām Ṣāḥib az-Zamān* (ʿaj), is not with us this Eid. Our first and most important duʿā to Allah on this day is that He hastens our master's arrival and places us amongst his sincere and loyal companions. Also, let us not forget to pray for our Muslim brothers and sisters around the world, especially those who are suffering - may Allah bring them relief and His divine help.

I sincerely congratulate the Imām of our time (ʿaj) and the Muslim ummah on this auspicious day of Eid ul-Fiṭr. I pray to Allah that He grants us all the best blessings, increases our faith, and includes us amongst those who have reached the rank of the muttaqīn, the God-conscious.

Eid Mubarak to you all, *Nabi R. Mir (Abidi)*

SIGNIFICANT DAYS OF SHAHR RAMAḌĀN

1st	Beginning of Fasting	*April 13, 2021
10th	Death anniversary of Ḥaḍrat Khadījah al-Kubrā (ʿa)	*April 22nd, 2021
15th	Birth anniversary of Imām Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī (ʿa)	*April 27th, 2021
18th	First night of 19th Laylat ul-Qadr	*April 30th, 2021
20th	Night of 21st Laylat ul-Qadr	*May 2nd, 2021
21st	Death anniversary of Imām ʿAlī ibn Abū Ṭālib (ʿa)	*May 3rd, 2021
22nd	Night of 23rd Laylat ul-Qadr	*May 4th, 2021

SIGNIFICANT DAYS OF SHAHR SHAWWĀL

1st	Eid ul-Fiṭr	*May 13th, 2021
25th	Death anniversary of Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq (ʿa)	*June 6th, 2021

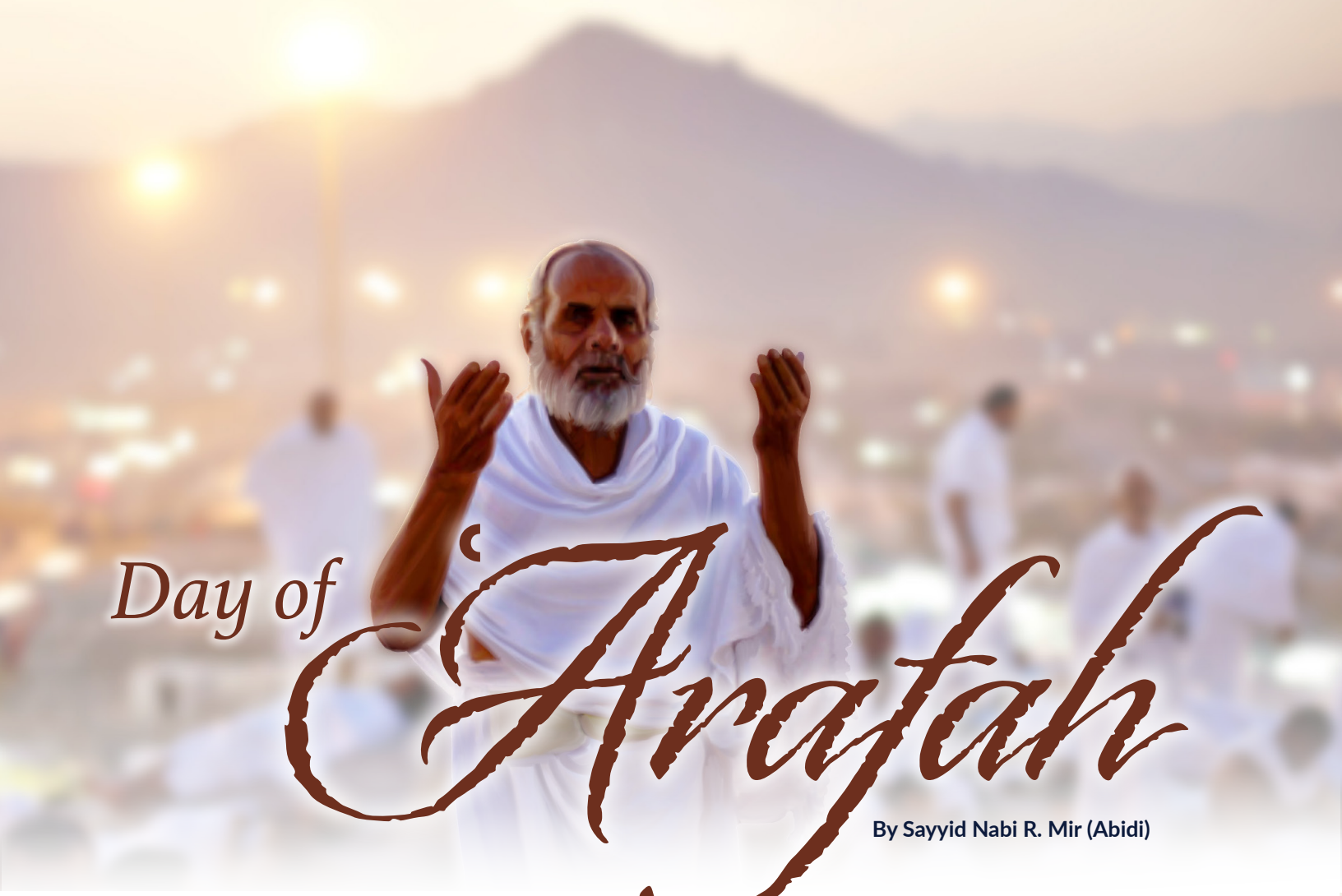
SIGNIFICANT DAYS OF SHAHR DHUL QAʿDAH

11th	Birth anniversary of Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā (ʿa)	*June 22nd, 2021
29th	Death anniversary of Imām Muḥammad at-Taqī al-Jawād (ʿa)	*July 10th, 2021

SIGNIFICANT DAYS OF SHAHR DHUL ḤIJJAH

10th	Eid ul-ʿAḍḥa	*July 20th, 2021
18th	Eid ul-Ghadīr	*July 28th, 2021
20th	Birth anniversary of Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim (ʿa)	*July 30th, 2021
24th	Eid ul-Mubāhalah	*August 3rd, 2021

*Please note the above Gregorian dates are only estimates. The dates are subject to change based on moon sighting, upon which the Islamic calendar is based.



Day of ʿArafah

By Sayyid Nabi R. Mir (Abidi)

Eid ul-ʿAḍḥā is the celebration that marks the completion of the Ḥajj pilgrimage on the 10th of Dhul Ḥijjah in Mecca. This pilgrimage is obligatory upon every able Muslim, where Muslims of every race and color from all over the world unite at the Kaʿbah (the sacred house of Allah), established by Prophet Ādam (ʿa) but rebuilt by Ibrahim (ʿa) later. This Eid marks the accomplishment of the Ḥajj rituals and celebrates the blessings of Allah given to the ḥujjāj (pilgrims) after the completion of Ḥajj, in the same way that Eid ul-Fiṭr marks the accomplishment of the fast.

The Day of ʿArafah is the day before Eid ul-ʿAḍḥā and is filled with prayers and supplications to Allah. Those performing the Ḥajj ritual will stop on the plains of ʿArafah a little ways outside of Mecca and spend the day in devotion to Allah. It is a place of maʿrifah, deep understanding and learning. One can attain the highest level of maʿrifah and ʿirfān and deep recognition of oneself there.

ʿArafah is a key part of Ḥajj and there is no exchange if one cannot be in ʿArafah on the ninth of the month from the time of afternoon prayer to the sunset prayer. For other parts of Ḥajj, if a pilgrim misses something, there is a way to make up for it. But if they miss ʿArafah, their Ḥajj cannot be counted as complete; the time between the two prayers is especially important and special–it has a specific mercy that the pilgrim should reserve their energy for. This particular piece of land has blessings because of the events that occurred here–including the sacrifice of Prophet Ibrāhīm (ʿa), the meeting of Prophet Ādam (ʿa), and it is where thousands of other prophets were granted propethood and given the message of Islam. It is also noted that even Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj) is confirmed to be in ʿArafah on the ninth between the time of the afternoon and sunset prayers.

Prophet Ādam and ʿArafah

Allah created the first human, Prophet Ādam (ʿa) from dust. His wife Ḥawwāʾ (ʿa) was created from the remaining clay from Prophet Ādam (ʿa), and they resided in Heaven together amongst the angels. After some time, they were sent down to earth, but in separate places. This was a test for them. Prophet Ādam (ʿa) was sent down to Sarandīb, Sri Lanka, according to

some traditions. Lady Ḥawwāʾ (ʿa) was sent down to Jeddah, a city whose name means "grandmother" because Lady Ḥawwāʾ (ʿa) is the grandmother of all humanity.

Prophet Ādam (ʿa) and Lady Ḥawwāʾ, now separated, had to find their way back to each other on foot. The walk was long, and Lady Ḥawwāʾ (ʿa) was only able to go a short distance at a time. Prophet Ādam (ʿa) walked day and night for forty years on Earth to find his wife.

At the end of their journey toward each other, they met in ʿArafah on the mountain of Raḥmah—Mercy. This mountain is named Raḥmah because when Prophet Ādam (ʿa) was asking for forgiveness and doing ṭawbah (repentance) for his mistake, Allah revealed to him His Asmāʾ al-Ḥusnā, His All-Beautiful names. Through this, the mercy of Allah was revealed in the form of a duʾā:

اِلهي بِحَقِّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ اَنتَ المَحمُودُ

Ilāhī bi-ḥaqqi Muḥammadin-wa antal-Maḥmūd

O God, [I ask You] by the sake of Muḥammad—and You are the Praiseworthy

وَ بِحَقِّ عَلِي وَ اَنتَ العالی

Wa bi-ḥaqqi ʿAlīyyin-wa antal-ʿĀlā

And by the sake of ʿAlī—and You are the Exalted

وَ بِحَقِّ فاطِمَةَ وَ اَنتَ فاطِرُ السّمواتِ و الأرضِ

Wa bi-ḥaqqi Fāṭimah wa anta Fāṭirus-samawāti wal-arḍ

And by the sake of Fāṭimah—and You are the Originator of the Heavens and the earth

وَ بِحَقِّ الحَسَنِ وَ اَنتَ المُحسِنُ

Wa bi-ḥaqqil-Ḥasani wa antal-Muḥsin

And by the sake of Ḥasan—and You are the Benevolent

وَ بِحَقِّ الحُسَينِ وَ اَنتَ قَديمُ الأِحسانِ

Wa bi-ḥaqqil-Ḥusayni wa anta Qadīmul-iḥsān

And by the sake of Ḥusayn—and You are the eternally Benevolent

Ādam received these 'words' from his Lord (Noble Qurʿān, 2:37). These kalamāt have three main components. Seeking intercession to the Ahl al-Bayt, acknowledging one's shortcomings, and seeking Allah's pardon.

Prophet Ādam (ʿa) received these 'words' from his Lord (Noble Qurʾān, 2:37). These kalamāt have three main components. Seeking intercession to the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa), acknowledging one's shortcomings, and seeking Allah's pardon. On the plains of ʿArafah stands Jabal ar-Raḥmah (The Mountain of Mercy) where Prophet Ādam (ʿa) and Lady Ḥawwāʾ (ʿa) met, and at the foot of which they supplicated and repented. All the prophets had najwā or conversed intimately with Allah on this mountain. It is a piece of heaven because Allah's mercy falls here.

"We said, 'O Ādam, dwell with your mate in paradise, and eat thereof freely whencesoever you wish; but do not approach this tree, lest you should be among the wrongdoers.'"

Then Satan caused them to stumble from it, and he dislodged them from what they were in; and We said, 'Get down, being enemies of one another! On the earth shall be your abode and sustenance for a time.'

"Then Ādam received certain words from his Lord, and He turned to him clemently. Indeed He is the All-Clement, the All-Merciful."

"We said, 'Get down from it, all together! Yet, should any guidance come to you from Me, those who follow My guidance shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve.'" (Noble Qurʾān, 2:35-38)

Allah asked Prophet Ādam (ʿa) if he wanted to see his status in the eyes of Allah before and after he asked for forgiveness. Prophet Ādam (ʿa) was surprised that his status was elevated so much after he asked for forgiveness due to the trials and tribulations he experienced. His previous status was given by Allah but this one was a status he had earned. Allah then asked if Prophet Ādam (ʿa) would like to go back to the garden, Prophet Ādam (ʿa) said that he would rather stay on this Earth with Lady Ḥawwāʾ (ʿa) because they had seen that only in this dunyā (world) did they have the possibility of reaching such a high status and optimizing their potential. There, they also established the first family system.

After this, Prophet Ādam (ʿa) and Lady Ḥawwāʾ (ʿa) walked to mashʿar (a religious site in ḥajj) and made a covenant with Allah, saying, *"O Allah, from now onward since you gave me this privilege of khalīfatullāh (the vicegerent/representative of Allah), help me fulfill this duty."* After this, the pair continued to Minā, then Mecca. In Mecca, Allah commanded Prophet Ādam (ʿa) to make the Kaʿbah, the house of Allah, and alongside it Prophet Ādam (ʿa) should make his own house to live with his family. Prophet Ādam (ʿa) now found complete tranquility as he established Allah's house and his family's home side by side in tawḥīd (Divine Unity) and submission.

EID UL-FIṬR

By Asad Raza

The word Eid has its origin in the Arabic term 'awd' which means to return. In this sense, Eid is the day of man's return toward his Lord. After passing through the month of Ramaḍān, during which a believer purifies his soul, he may find his original fiṭrah, or nature, once again; he may find himself free from the burden of sins and find that he is better connected to his Creator. In this way, he leaves behind a life of heedlessness, and, instead, returns to his Lord, reverting to the original nature in which man has been created. This original nature is that of purity and tranquility; the rigorous training of the soul in the blessed month of Ramaḍān makes us shed the uncleanliness of material desires and returns us to that original self of purity.

Eid is a celebration as well. It's a celebration similar to the day when a meritorious student receives his rewards for performing the best in exams. It's a day of joy, a joy born out of the feeling of being reconnected to a long lost love. The Lord whose mercy precedes and exceeds His punishment, and who has made mercy incumbent upon Himself for His creatures, has declared this day as the day of celebration, is the love that has been found. It's a celebration for all those whose fasts and prayers have been accepted and who have attained the purpose of fasting, as Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) is quoted to have said: *"Verily, it is only a festival for he whose fasts Allah has accepted and whose prayers He has acknowledged, and every day in which we do not disobey Allah is a day of celebration."*

The day of Eid is also one of happiness and thankfulness. It's an occasion for happiness because a believer has returned to His Lord with a clean soul and so he celebrates the day with prayers, clean clothing, perfume, and so forth. It's an occasion for gratitude as well because Allah provided a whole month for purification and bestowal of mercy. That being said, Eid is not merely a day of merrymaking and enjoyment. We as Muslims should celebrate with festivals of special remembrance of Allah and with special thanks to Him for all the blessings and mercy. We must take care on this blessed day that our celebration should not belie the actual purpose and meaning of Eid. We shouldn't be celebrating the release of accursed Satan but rather our release from the confines of sins, and reconstruction and revival of our original nature.

The two recommended chapters, Chapter 87, Al-Aʿlā, and Chapter 97, Ash-Shams that are read in the Eid prayers admonish us about the remembrance of Allah and that success is only for those who purify themselves. The Noble Qurʾān emphasizes on remembrance: *"Therefore do remind, surely reminding does profit,"* (Noble Qurʾān, 87:09) and who will mind the reminding? *"He who fears will mind."* (Noble Qurʾān, 87:10) The month of Ramaḍān has the purpose of cleaning rusted souls so that reminding works and ends in success for the believers: *"He indeed shall be successful who purifies himself, And magnifies the name of his Lord and prays."* (Noble Qurʾān, 87:14-15) The day of Eid is truly the day of success for the believers on which they should thank and praise their Lord.

The month long fasting if done with due honor, surely raises us to lofty levels of spirituality. Ramaḍān clears the dust so that the right direction becomes clearer for the soul who purifies: *"And the soul and Him Who made it perfect, Then He inspired it to understand what is right and wrong for it; He will indeed be successful who purifies it, And he will indeed fail who corrupts it."* (Noble Qurʾān, 91:7-10) This Eid, let us ask ourselves, have we purified our souls? Have we returned to Allah? This will measure our success in the month of Ramaḍān.

Editor's note: The above excerpt was originally published by the Islamic Insights online platform and has been altered for grammatical accuracy while the original message has remained intact.

Ways to Celebrate the Holiday:

1

Perform ghusl (ritual bath) the night of Eid

2

Praise Allah for completing the month of Ramaḍān

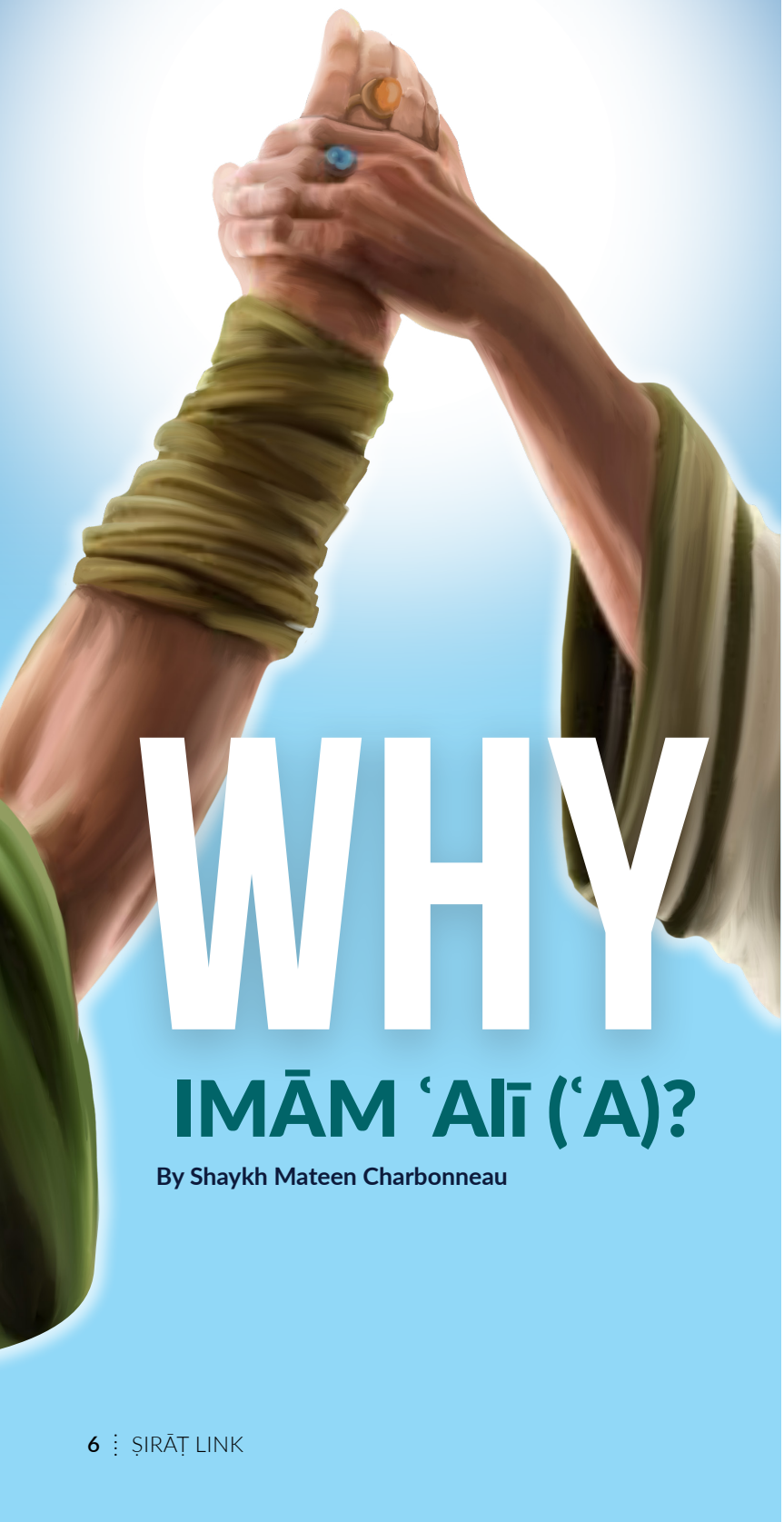
3

Reach out to family members and connect with them

4

Express gratitude to our friends and family for their support

"For whomsoever I am his master, then this ʿAlī (ʿa) is also his master. O' Allah, befriend those who befriend him (ʿAlī) and oppose he who opposes him."



WHY IMĀM ʿAlī (ʿA)?

By Shaykh Mateen Charbonneau

One may ask, what is *wilāyah* (guardianship)? What does it have to do with me? Why do I need to concern myself with what happened after the death of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ)? Why do I need to follow someone after his death when I can just follow his traditions?

Firstly, we would like to explain wilāyah in the context of our discussion and why it is important. *Wilāyah* means the divinely appointed guardianship of Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) by the Noble Prophet (ṣ) on the strict command of Allah. On returning from the farewell pilgrimage, a revelation came down to the Prophet (ṣ):

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ ۖ وَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ ۚ وَاللَّـهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّـهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

"O Apostle! Communicate that which has been sent down to you from your Lord, and if you do not, you will not have communicated His message, and Allah shall protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelievers." (The Noble Qurʾān, 5:67)

So, he (ṣ) stopped everyone in a place known as Ghadīr Khumm during the heat of the day to deliver a message. This message was so important that if he did not convey it, Allah compared it to the Prophet (ṣ) not fulfilling the communication of His Divine message. With this level of importance–that the Prophet's (ṣ) duty would have been incomplete without this message–then we must certainly review what was said, understand and implement its teachings. The Noble Prophet's (ṣ) speech on that day is famously known as the Sermon of al-Ghadīr.

Allah has never left mankind without a Divine guide. That is why Allah commanded Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) to appoint the next Divine leader whom Allah determined was Imām ʿAlī (ʿa). This would be someone who would continue his (ṣ) work: to guide the people, to explain and interpret the Qurʾān and Sunnah, and to guard the religion. The Prophet (ṣ) raised ʿAlī's (ʿa) hand and said: *"For whomsoever I am his master, then this ʿAlī (ʿa) is also his master. O' Allah, befriend those who befriend him (ʿAlī) and oppose he who opposes him."* Thus, the Prophet (ṣ) made the successorship of ʿAlī (ʿa) solid in front of the people.

This event is considered as *mutawātir* (widely reported to the point there is no doubt in its occurrence). Allāmah Aminī mentioned[1] 66 sources from Sunni scholars that confirm that the verse is referring to Imām ʿAlī (ʿa). There are 89 chains of narrations for the ḥadīth about Ghadīr Khumm from Sunni sources and 43 chains of narration from Shīʿah sources. 90,000 people witnessed this event, 110 companions, 84 *tābiʿīn*[2] narrated the ḥadīth and 26 historians mention the event.

The following verse was revealed after the Prophet (ṣ) vested Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) with the Divine appointment of *wilāyah*:

اَلْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

"...Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessing upon you, and I have approved Islam as your religion..." (The Noble Qurʾān, 5:3)

As wilāyah is vital to our practice and understanding of faith, it is important that we understand what it means and what it entails. Ibn ʿAbbas once asked the Prophet (ṣ) to advise him to which he said: *"I advise you to love ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (ʿa). I swear by Allah who sent me as a Prophet that Allah will not accept the good deeds of any servant without first questioning him about his love for ʿAlī (ʿa), and Allah knows the truth. So, if the servant accepted the wilāyah (guardianship), Allah will accept all the deeds of the servant, despite his shortcomings."*[3]

Another verse denoting who has authority over the believers is:

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّـهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ

"Your guardian (Walī) is only Allah, His Apostle and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakat while bowing down." (The Noble Qurʾān 5:55)

As commonly agreed by both Sunni and Shīʿah alike, the last part of this verse as revealed refers to Imām ʿAlī (ʿa)who gave his ring to a beggar while bowing in prayer. The famous Sunni exegete, Zamakhsharī says that the و in this verse is واو حالية waw ḥāliyyah meaning: while. This is why the verse is properly translated as: pay the poor-rate while they bow. Some misinformed people who strive to hide the merits of Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) claim the word *Walī* means friend. Since everyone knew that ʿAlī (ʿa) was beloved to the Prophet (ṣ), would it be logical to send a verse down only to tell them all that ʿAlī (ʿa) is their friend?!

However, Zamakhsharī mentions[4] that the word *Walī* means the master of affairs (*Walī ul-Amr)*, the leader (*sayyid*) and master *(mawlā*).

This merit is strictly for the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) and we can deduce that from the particle in the verse إِنَّمَا(Innamā). This particle is used to prove what comes after it and negates what is not mentioned. So, in this verse the wilāyah is proved only for those mentioned in the āyah and negates it for others.

It is important to note that the authority (wilāyah) of Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) in the āyah is joined to that of the Noble Prophet (ṣ). The joining by واو العطف (the و meaning: and, *waw al-ʿaṭf)* makes it the same authority as the first one it is coupled to. It would be improper to say walī means master in regards to Allah, but the words that are joined just refer to one who is loved or a friend.

Some bring the argument that this verse is in the plural whereas Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) is one man. To answer this, the usage of the plural form

الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ

"Those who maintain the prayer and give the zakāt while bowing down."

in the verse is used to denote greatness and respect which is common in the Arabic language. When we ask a scholar how they are doing, we would for example say Kayfa Ḥālakum (How are you?), yet we use the plural Kum كم and not the singular Ka ك as a sign of respect.

There is much more to discuss in regards to this verse; scholars have written voluminous books on the topic. But for sake of brevity what was mentioned will have to suffice for this article. Wilāyah is important and plays a pivotal role in our lives. We see that our deeds are dependent on accepting the guardianship of those appointed by Allah. When we wish to understand the Qurʾān and the traditions, then we should refer to those with the authority and qualifications to interpret the Qurʾān and traditions. As such, the guardianship of those appointed by Allah carried on the mission of the Noble Prophet (ṣ). Wilayah will keep us united on the straight path and protect us from the deviation of following the various opinions of those without any divinely appointed

[1] Al-Ghadīr, Vol. 3, P. 156

[2] Bishārah al-Muṣṭafā, P. 64, Ḥadīth #9; Al-Āmālī aṭ-Ṭūsī, Vol. 1, P. 104; Biḥār al-Anwār, Vol. 16, P. 370 and Vol. 28, P. 157; Tāwīl al-Āyāt, Vol. 1, P. 277.

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّـهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ

"Your guardian (Walī) is only Allah, His Apostle and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakāt while bowing down."

(Noble Qurʾān 5:55)

authority.

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّـهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا ۚ وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّـهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّـهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

"All of you united, hold fast to the rope of Allah, and recall how He favored you when your hostility to each other had torn you apart. He united your hearts in one faith and through His Grace you became brothers. You were on the verge of falling headlong into the abyss of fire, but Allah saved you. This is how Allah explains to you His revelations so that you may have the right guidance."
(The Noble Qurʾān 3:103)

Allah commands us to hold fast and cling to the rope of Allah all together, but what is this rope of Allah that is to unite us all? According to the great expert in tafsīr ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm who says in Tafsīr Qummī, the rope of Allah means tawḥīd and wilāyah (Guardianship of the Household of the Prophet (ṣ)).[5]

ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm says in Tafsīr Qummī about the part of the verse which says be not divided, that there is a narration from Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir (ʿa) where he spoke about this part of the verse saying: *"Allah the blessed and exalted knew that the people would divide and differ after their Prophet (ṣ) therefore he prohibited them from dividing just as He prohibited those before them. Then He commanded them all collectively to unite upon the Wilāyah (divine authority of the Family of Muḥammad (ṣ)".* [6]

This love of the Family of the Prophet (ṣ) unites us all by something even stronger than kinship. Wilāyah is the core of our unity and we love each other based upon this mutual love we share for Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī (ʿa).

"Praise be to Allah Who made perfect His religion and completed His favor with the establishment of the commander of the faithful, ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib's (ʿa) love and authority! Praise be to Allah Who blessed us to be among those who cling and hold to the love and authority of the Commander of the Faithful and all the Imāms, peace be upon them all!"

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[3] Asās al-Balāghah, P. 679.2 Bishārah al-Muṣṭafā, P. 64, Ḥadīth #9; Al-Āmālī aṭ-Ṭūsī, Vol. 1, P. 104; Biḥār al-Anwār, Vol. 16, P. 370 and Vol. 28, P. 157; Tāwīl al-Āyāt, Vol. 1, P. 277.

[4] Tafsīr al-Burhān, by Sayyid Hashim Ḥusaynī al-Baḥrānī, Vol. 2, P. 256

[5] Tafsīr al-Burhān, by Sayyid Hashim Ḥusaynī al-Baḥrānī, Vol. 2, P. 259

[6] Tafsīr al-Burhān, by Sayyid Hashim Ḥusaynī al-Baḥrānī, Vol. 2, P. 259

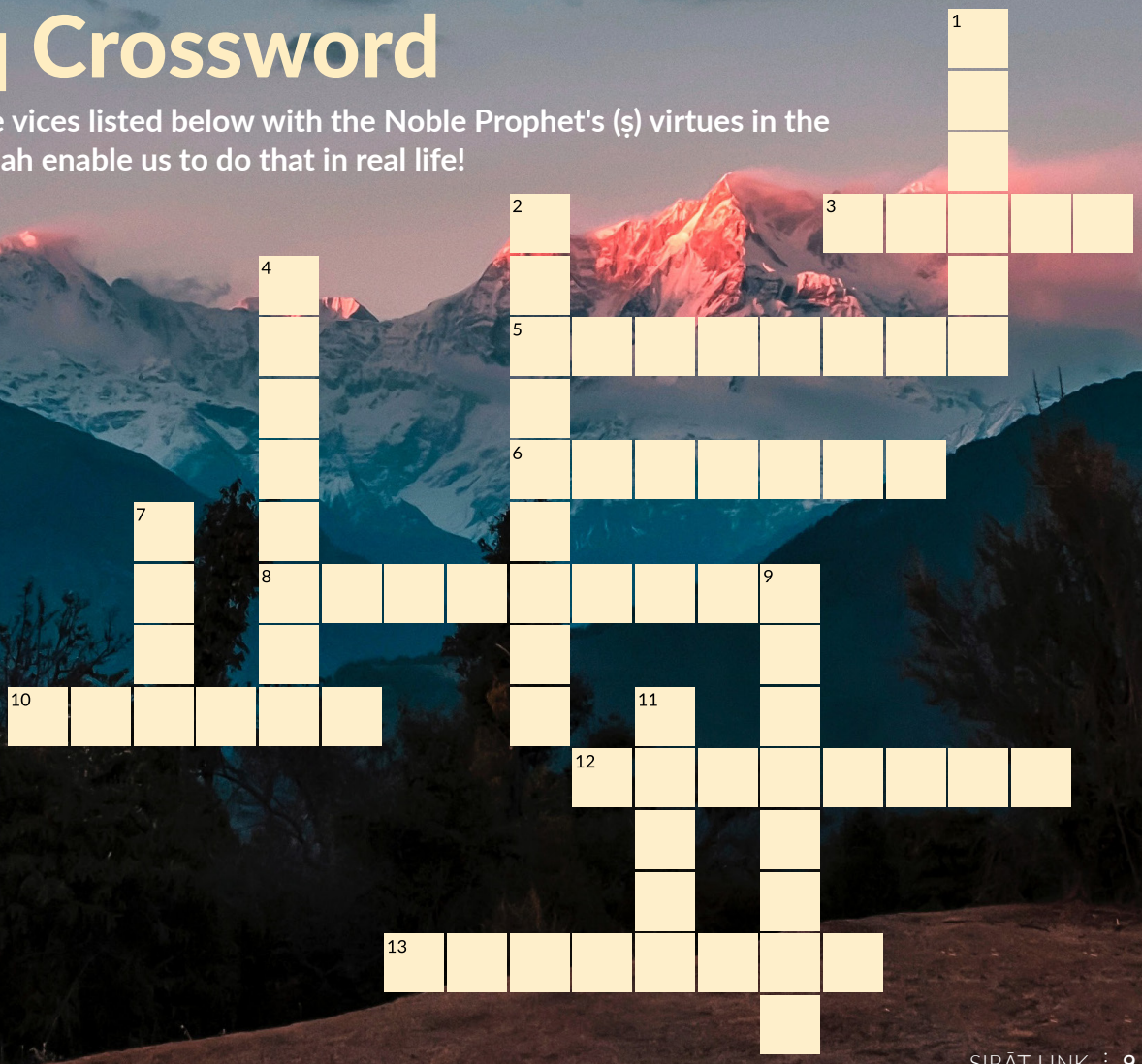
Ramaḍān Word Search

Can you find 24 Ramaḍān-themed words?

L A L L A H D M I L S U M E P T R T I F L A W U E U X P S Y
M E U T C S D N E I R F K Z G E N E R O S I T Y N R Y G R L
A X F V Q I Z O X N D K D U J S X L H P A Y P L I A E E L I
L K X U G Z A V S J I W D L H N Z M F I F T D H L T P G O M
S R R R Z Q U B S R E Y A R P U A I L G A I I D P F I Z M A
I A S N E D U T G T A R G D P S Z X E E S R J W I I U C N F
N O I T I D A R T X J P A T I E N C E M T A S K C D O O W V
F R Y X O U Y P M U H A M M A D V B M O I H A K S Y M C Z G
E E J O S E L F A W V E W R E L I G I O N C M V I N S B U F
H T I A F L J D H C S E P I F H L S H N G Y R E D A W N O N

Akhlāq Crossword

Help us replace the vices listed below with the Noble Prophet's (ṣ) virtues in the crossword. May Allah enable us to do that in real life!



ACROSS

3 gossip
5 suspicious
6 hypocritical
8 vengeful
10 arrogant
12 hostile
13 ungrateful

DOWN

1 hateful
2 greedy
4 deceptive
7 angry
9 miserly
11 fearful

Answers can be found at the bottom of page 17

BEARING THE DIFFIC

By Seyed Ali Musawi

If we look at people all around the world from the very rich to the very poor, the one thing which we all have in common is that we all go through times of extreme hardship and difficulty. One of the questions that people ask, especially those who are religious, is why does Allah allow us to go through this hardship? Why can't life be smooth and easy? If we are praying, fasting, and being good Muslims, why doesn't Allah make our lives easier? We still go through times where we are pushed to the breaking point. What is the reason behind these difficulties and tests?

Allah directly talks about this in Sūrah Baqarah, Verse 155, where He says: *"Truly, we will put you to the test with some fear, hunger, and some loss of wealth, lives, and children. So (O Muḥammad) convey the good news to those who are patient..."* Here in the Qurʾān, Allah clearly tells us that He is going to test us with things which are going to be unbelievably difficult. Why would Allah do this? Isn't He the All-Merciful Creator? Isn't He the one who controls everything in the universe?

The answer to this is that we go through tough times in life because it is hardship and difficulty which allow us to grow as human beings and become stronger and better people. For example, if we decide one day that we're too weak and puny, and we have to put on some serious muscle, what

The first thing we can do when going through tough times is to always keep Allah in mind. The Qurʾān says:

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ ٱللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ ٱلْقُلُوبُ

"It is only through the remembrance of Allah that the hearts find rest."

Noble Qurʾān, 13:28

This verse makes it clear that when we remember Allah and think of His power and how He has taken care of us from when we were in the wombs of our mothers and how He has guided us to the truth of Islam, our hearts become calm and we find peace. At the end of the day, it is Allah who is in charge, not you or me. If we are going through a tough time, we have a Lord who is going to take care of us.

ULTIES OF LIFE

do we need to do? The answer is that we have to lift heavy weights which stresses our muscles to the point of failure. And when we do this, our muscles grow stronger and our bodies become hard and sculpted. This is a universal rule which applies to everything in creation. When we are placed in hardship, we grow, not just mentally, but also spiritually as well. Allah allows us to undergo hardship so that we can become a better version of ourselves and to become more capable servants working in His path. Now this is all fine but difficult times are still difficult, so I wanted to mention two points that we can use when we are going through these hard times. Inshāʾ Allāh, they will help us get through them faster and easier.

Firstly, do your best to remember Allah.

He has power and control over everything in this universe. When we remember this, our hearts and minds become strong and we are able to deal with the situation better.

A practical way of doing this is to spend some of our time each day reciting the Qurʾān and reciting the various supplications which we have. These things will naturally help us to remember Allah and connect with him. There is also dhikr, or the recitation of Allah's names and praises, such as saying Allāhu Akbar, Allah is the Greatest, or alḥamdulillāh, all praise is due to Allah. People usually use a tasbīḥ where they can keep count of their recitation of these noble names and praises of Allah. All of these things help us to remember Allah and connect with Him more deeply--- and this makes tough times much easier to deal with.

Adhān

اللهُ أَكْبَرُ Allāhu Akbar Allah is the Greatest	x 4
اَشْهَدُ انْ لاٰ اِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ Ashhadu an-lā ilāha illallāha I testify that there is no god except Allah	x 2
اَشْهَدُ انَّ مُحَمَّدً رَّسُولُ اللهِ Ashhadu anna Muḥammadar Rasūlullāh I testify that Muḥammad is the messenger of Allah	x 2
اَشْهَدُ انَّ عَلِيًّا وَّلَىُ اللهِ Ashhadu anna ʿAlīyyan-w walīyullāh I testify that ʿAlī is the vicegerent and close guardian of Allah	x 2
حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلاٰةِ Ḥayya ʿalaṣ ṣalāh Hasten to the prayer	x 2
حَيَّ عَلَى الفَلاٰحِ Ḥayya ʿalal falāḥ Hasten to success	x 2
حَيَّ عَلَى خَيْرِ الْعَمَلِ Ḥayya ʿalā khayril ʿamal Hasten to the best action	x 2
اللهُ أَكْبَرُ Allāhu Akbar Allah is the Greatest	x 2
لاٰ الٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ Lā ilāha illallāh There is no god except Allah	x 2

Secondly, always rely on Allah through tawakkul (reliance and trust in Allah).

The next thing we can do when we're going through a tough time is to always rely on Allah to help us get through it. Let's face it, many of the things we deal with in life are way bigger than us and we need Allah to help us get through them. Tawakkul is the idea of always relying on Allah and trusting in His plan. If you are in a difficult situation, there is something that you have to learn from that situation. You are in that situation for a certain reason. Try to understand what that is and trust in Allah to help you get through it.

Allah in the Qur'ān says:

وَمَن يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ

"...And whoever puts his trust in Allah,
Allah will be sufficient for him..."
Noble Qur'ān, 65:3

In this verse, Allah makes it clear that when we put our trust in Him (while also doing our part), then He will get us through that difficulty.

In a narration from Imām ʿAlī (ʿa), he says: *"Whoever has tawakkul, that which is difficult will become easy and the means will fall into place."*

Here, Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) explains to us that when we trust in Allah and understand that He truly has our backs, the things which we saw as extremely difficult, suddenly become easy for us and Allah, because of that trust that we have in Him, solves our problems for us.

Next, seek counsel from qualified individuals. Another thing that we commonly saw in the life of the Prophet (ṣ) is that he encouraged people to seek advice and consult with others. Many times, we are looking at our problems from our perspective and we get stuck–we don't know what to do. But when someone sees the issue from another perspective, they might help us with a solution we hadn't thought of. Of course, it's very important that we find people who are wise and qualified; if they lack in this way, they might get us stuck even deeper in our issues.

Lastly, spend time reflecting. An important way that we can help get through tough times is through thinking and self-reflection. If you are going through a difficulty, thinking about what is happening and trying to understand it will help get you through it. In some cases, tough times are designed to make us stronger or to prepare us for something in the future. In other cases, it might be due to something that we're doing wrong that has gotten us into that situation. Thinking through it will help us to know which type of situation it is and how we can best get through it.

Ultimately, my friends, this life is a life of tests and trials. We haven't been put on this earth to live in comfort and ease–that comes later in the hereafter. The reason we are here is to go through different tests and see how we do. Will we fail, becoming hopeless and angry, or will we keep our faith and steadfastness? You can't control what happens to you in this world, but you can control how you react to it. Always remember that Allah is carefully watching over you and guiding you, and He has given you all the tools to succeed. Inshāʾ Allāh, we pray that Allah will continue to guide all of us and help us during these tough times.

Iqāmah

x 2	اللهُ أَكْبَر Allāhu Akbar	Allah is the Greatest
x 2	اَشْهَدُ انْ لاٰ اِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ Ashhadu an-lā ilāha illallāha	I testify that there is no god except Allah
x 2	اَشْهَدُ انَّ مُحَمَّدً رَّسُولُ اللهِ Ashhadu anna Muḥammadar Rasūlullāh	I testify that Muḥammad is the messenger of Allah
x 2	اَشْهَدُ انَّ عَلِيًّا وَّلِيُّ اللهِ Ashhadu anna ʿAlīyyan-w walīyullāh	I testify that ʿAlī is the vicegerent and close guardian of Allah
x 2	حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلاٰةِ Ḥayya ʿalaṣ ṣalāh	Hasten to the prayer
x 2	حَيَّ عَلَى الفَلاٰحِ Ḥayya ʿalal falāḥ	Hasten to success
x 2	حَيَّ عَلَى خَيْرِ الْعَمَلِ Ḥayya ʿalā khayril ʿamal	Hasten to the best action
x 2	قَدْ قَامَتِ الصَّلَاةُ Qad qāmatiṣ ṣalāh	Establish the prayer!
x 2	اللهُ أَكْبَر Allāhu Akbar	Allah is the Greatest
x 1	لاٰ اِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ Lā ilāha illallāh	There is no god except Allah

Death of a Great Friend

By Taymaz Tabrizi

When the Muslims Met the Byzantines in Battle: The Story of Jaʿfar ibn. Abī Ṭālib

Since the dawn of Islam when Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) first received revelation from Allah, the world was hostile toward him (ṣ) and Allah's religion. From the beginning of his prophethood until the end of his life, many people, tribes and nations sought to bring Islam down.

Most of the battles Muslims faced during the lifetime of the Prophet (ṣ) were against fellow Arab tribes in the Arabian peninsula. In 629 A.D, things took a different turn when the first battle between Muslims and Byzantium (the Christian Eastern Roman Empire, also known as Rūm in the Qurʾān) took place. The conflict was known as the Battle of Muʾtah, a village in what is known today as Kerak, Jordan.

Like other merchants, Muslims used trade routes in the Levant (Greater Syria region) to conduct commerce. However, as a Byzantine vassal state ruled by the Christian Arab Ghassānids, who were openly hostile toward Islam and Muslims, the inhabitants regularly looted and raided Muslim caravans.

In an attempt at reconciliation, the Prophet (ṣ) sent an emissary to negotiate a peaceful resolution to the problem. However, an important chief of the Ghassānids had the emissary murdered. Some traditions note that the Prophet (ṣ) sent several emissaries all of whom were assassinated.

In response to open hostilities, the Prophet (ṣ) dispatched three thousand troops to bring the Ghassānids to justice and establish security for Muslim merchants. Yet even in the heat of the hostilities, the Prophet (ṣ) commanded Muslims to follow Islam's ethical guidelines when dealing with the Christian Ghassānids by stating:

"Proceed, but neither break pledges, nor act unfaithfully in regard to war booty, and do not mutilate the killed, do not kill children, nor kill monks in their monasteries." (Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī)

The Byzantine emperor was soon alerted to the Prophet's (ṣ) mobilization and dispatched a large Byzantine force to defend the Ghassānids; some historical accounts state that over 100,000 troops were deployed to fight the Muslims.

The Prophet (ṣ) had appointed his cousin Jaʿfar ibn. Abī Ṭālib as the commander of the force. Jaʿfar was the son of

his uncle Abū Ṭālib and the older brother of ʿAlī ibn. Abī Ṭālib (the Prophet's (ṣ) cousin and son-in-law). In the early years of prophethood, Jaʿfar had led Muslim refugees to safety in Abyssinia. These new Muslims were escaping persecution and murder from the Meccans. Jaʿfar had managed to secure safety from the Christian Negus (ruler) of Abyssinia at the time. Abyssinia is alternatively known as Ethiopia. When Jaʿfar returned to Medina after some time, the Prophet (ṣ) was most ecstatic to see him for he had missed him dearly with all of his heart.

Going back to the battle with the Byzantines and Ghassānids, if Jaʿfar were to be martyred as first in command, he was to be replaced by the second in command Zayd ibn. Ḥārithah, and following him ʿAbdullāh ibn. Rawāḥah. Some sources state that it was Zayd who had been first in command, but more reliable historical sources demonstrate that it was indeed Jaʿfar who was the first commander of the force.

All three of the commanders were martyred as a result of the Byzantines entering the battle. Despite heavy losses, the Muslims managed to use a few tactics that proved to be advantageous. One of these was to move troops around at night, making it sound as if reinforcements were being introduced. By applying these tactics they made the Byzantines think that their army was larger than it actually was and thus forced a stalemate, allowing the Muslims to evacuate safely and the Byzantine forces to retreat.

The battle was not a victory for the Muslims but it did provide them with much needed experience in Byzantine warfare tactics. This would become useful when the Muslims defeated the Byzantines a few years later. Some reports also suggest that due to the defensive force used by Muslims, the trade routes became safer for Muslim caravans and merchants in the Levant.

The battle nevertheless left the Prophet (ṣ) in much pain, not because of the Muslims' retreat but because of the martyrdom of his beloved cousin, supporter and friend Jaʿfar ibn. Abī Ṭālib.

When the Prophet (ṣ) learned of his death, he cried deeply. The first thing he did was to visit Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib's children. While he was caressing the heads of the children, Jaʿfar's wife Asmāʾ bint ʿUmays stated: "O Messenger of Allah (ṣ), you are stroking their heads as if they are orphans." Upon hearing this, the Prophet (ṣ) informed her of Jaʿfar's martyrdom and she wept.

Historical sources state that Jaʿfar sustained some fifty to ninety wounds on the front of his body with around twenty-five of those on his face. He had no wounds on his back, however, which demonstrated that he never turned his back in battle.

When Jaʿfar was riding in battle, he held the Muslim army's banner. When one of his hands was cut off, he held the banner with the other hand. When his second hand was cut off, he held the flag with his two upper arms against his chest. Jaʿfar held it until he was martyred in battle.

> Because of his bravery, courage and sacrifices in battle, the archangel Gabriel informed the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) that Jaʿfar would be given wings in the next life and would fly with the angels. It is for this reason that he is known as Jaʿfar aṭ-Ṭayyār (Jaʿfar the Flyer of Heaven).

Jaʿfar was particularly dear to the Prophet (ṣ). The Prophet (ṣ) was an orphan and was raised by his uncle Abū Ṭālib, growing up in the same household so that Jaʿfar was like a brother to him. Jaʿfar was one of the first converts to Islam and led a group of Muslim refugees to Africa in order to save their lives from the Meccan persecutions.

When Jaʿfar would go into battle, the Prophet (ṣ) always missed him dearly. For example, when the Muslims conquered Khaybar in 628 AD, one of the most important battles in early Muslim history, and Jaʿfar returned, the Prophet (ṣ) said: "I do not know which event makes me happier, the arrival of Ja'far or the conquest of Khaybar!"

Having been raised with the Prophet (ṣ), Jaʿfar also adopted the Prophet's (ṣ) character and sense of charity. The Prophet's (ṣ) companions agreed that Jaʿfar was most generous to the poor wherever he went. Even when he had little to eat, he would offer all he had to the poor and let the homeless lodge in his home as if it was theirs.

Jaʿfar ibn. Abī Ṭālib's grave is located in modern day Kerak, Jordan, which is where the Battle of Muʾtah took place. His tomb is still standing and an important site for all Muslim and non-Muslim pilgrims of the world.

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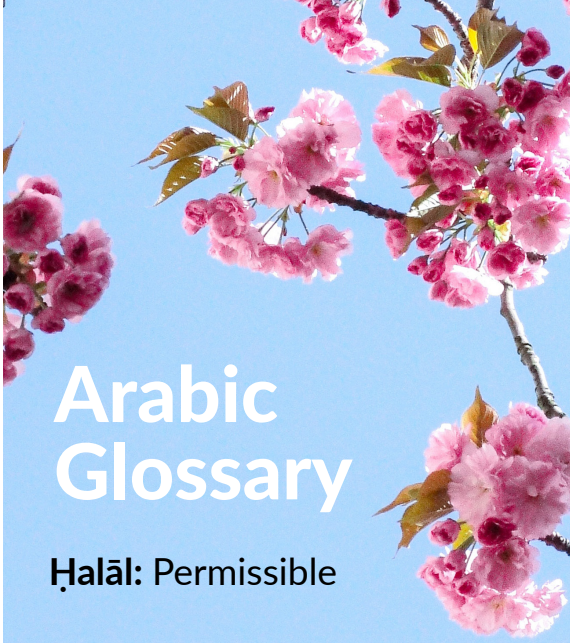
Transliteration Guide

Arabic terms in this booklet have been transliterated according to the following guidelines:

ء	a, i, or u (initial form)
ء	’ (medial or final form)
ا	a
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	j
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	ẓ
ع	‘
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
ه	h
و	w
ي	y
ة	h (without iḍāfah)
ة	t (with iḍāfah)
ـَـ	a
ـِـ	i
ـُـ	u



Arabic Glossary

Ḥalāl: Permissible

Ḥarām: Not permissible

Dhikr: Remembrance of God (Allah)

Īmān: Faith

Rizq: Sustenance

Ṭahārah: Ritual purity

Next Issue

A Life of Solitude

Eid al-Mubāhalah

The Birth of Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā (ʿa)

WORD SEARCH ANSWERS: Allah, charity, dawn, eidalfitr, faith, family, fasting, friends, generosity, gratitude, iftar, islam, month, moon, masjid, Muḥammad, muslim, patience, prayer, quran, religion, self discipline, sunset, tradition **CROSSWORD ANSWERS: Across:** 3-quiet, 5-trusting, 6-sincere, 8-forgiving, 10-humble, 12-friendly, 13-grateful. **Down:** 1-loving, 2-satisfied, 4-truthful, 7-calm, 9-generous, 11-brave

"If Allah should aid you, no one can overcome you."

Noble Qurʾān, 3:160